

# **THE NEW THEOSOPHY**

**BY**

**ERNEST WOOD**

**THE THEOSOPHICAL PRESS**  
Wheaton, Illinois

W  
16



# THE NEW THEOSOPHY

By

**ERNEST WOOD**

*Recording Secretary of the Theosophical Society;  
late Principal of the Sind National College Hyder-  
abad; late Hon. Secretary, Theosophical Educa-  
tional Trust; late President, Manchester City Lodge,  
England; President, Blavatsky Lodge, Sydney.*



THE THEOSOPHICAL PRESS  
WHEATON, ILL., U. S. A.

COPYRIGHT  
THE THEOSOPHICAL PRESS  
WHEATON, ILLINOIS  
1929

## PREFACE

The world thinks of Theosophy as belief in:

- (1) Reincarnation, or rebirth on earth;
- (2) Karma, or the repayment in such rebirths of all good and ill; and
- (3) Evolution, or the progress of the soul through experience in the course of these rebirths.

The implications in connection with these are:

(1) That a man is not his body, which is only an instrument; that he survives death unchanged, and lives on in finer forms or "higher planes" between death and rebirth.

(2) That a man reaps as he sows; there is nothing gained without effort, but nothing once gained can be lost or taken away.

(3) That the world is a school for man, wherein he can develop to his perfection, on the attainment of which he need reincarnate no more; nevertheless, there are some who have reached this liberation who do reincarnate in order to help others, and these are Adepts or Masters.

There are very sound arguments in support of all these ideas. They may be found in many books. Coupling with these the great amount of solid evidence that exists in favor of belief in subtle bodies, higher planes, clairvoyant powers, and Adepts,<sup>1</sup> the theosophical

<sup>1</sup>See such books as:

*A Guide to Theosophy*, by Ernest Wood  
*Clairvoyance and Materialism*, by Dr. Geley  
*The Occult World*, by A. P. Sinnett  
*Old Diary Leaves*, by Col. H. S. Olcott

position has unquestionably all the weight of both reason and testimony on its side. In addition it provides the scope that men feel that they need—relieving the mind of the bondage of chance, the heart of the pains of separation, and the will of the incubus of servitude to circumstances or to a superior will. Thus the problems of life, both individual and social, are soluble, for human destiny is in human hands.

Yet these ideas are often held materialistically, and thus they miss the point and the virtue of Theosophy. Theosophy is the deeper belief that we are all in touch directly with the heart of life. It is *the* antithesis to materialism, whether in science or in religion. Theosophy is not a religion, or if it is it is the one religion in the world. In it every man is his own priest, and intermediaries between him and God are impossible. This is easy to prove, for if we ask a true Christian, or Buddhist, or Hindu, whether he would follow Christ, or Buddha, or Krishna, if that being has taught and shown selfishness, untruth and ugliness, his answer would be that certainly he would not. Then we could say to him: "You are no follower of Christ, or Buddha, or Krishna, or even of a God. You are a follower of goodness, truth and beauty. You are a judge of gods, and you measure them by your own ideals." There is surely no other religion, or means of union. More and more men are releasing themselves from narrow tyrannies because they recognize this God within, Who sits in judgment on the entire world. Many men have done the same, but the Theosophist is he who knows that he has done it, and therefore gives himself the name of Theosophist, which is "God-knower".

I call the *New Theosophy* that which makes clear at every point that all forms are in the life and are less than the life, and that never is the life held or supported or carried in or by the forms. In the light of this

essential truth reincarnation, karma and evolution take on an entirely new appearance, and knowledge of their true effects in our lives invests us with new power and freedom.

This is what may be called metaphysical, but that is what life is. It is not a material condition that we are considering, but life lived as such in the midst of forms which are less, not more, than itself. Madame Blavatsky expressed the need of this outlook when she wrote in *The Secret Doctrine* (I 192), referring to the doctrines of the evolution of the monads and the worlds:

"Unfortunately, there are few who are inclined to handle these doctrines only metaphysically. Even the best of the Western writers upon our doctrine declares in his work, when speaking of the evolution of the Monads, that on pure metaphysics of that sort we are now engaged. And in such case, as the Teacher remarks in a letter to him: 'Why this preaching of our doctrines, all this up-hill work and swimming *in adversum flumen*? Why should the West .... learn .... from the East ..... that which can never meet the requirements of the special tastes of the æsthetics?' And he draws his correspondent's attention 'to the formidable difficulties encountered by us (the Adepts) in every attempt we make to explain our metaphysics to the Western mind'."

And well he may; for outside of metaphysics, no occult philosophy, no esotericism is possible. It is like trying to explain the aspirations and affections, love and hatred, the most private and sacred workings in the soul and mind of a living man, by an anatomical description of the thorax and brain of his dead body.

I sincerely hope that this new statement of Theosophy will not bring me into conflict with any of my old theosophical friends. I must risk that. The time is ripe for it, and it must be made, be the results what they may.

E. W.

June, 1929.

## CHAPTER I

### THE VISION OF THE GOAL OF LIFE

#### *Insatiable Man*

It is agreed on all hands that all men want to be God, that is to say, they want to have omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience. How often have I wished that I could be in two places at once, and if that desire were granted I should want to be in a hundred! It may appear for some little time that a man is contented with smaller things, such as a home and happy wife and children. But this is only a smooth harbor following a troubled voyage, and very soon dissatisfaction (I do not like the word discontent) will raise its head and he will yearn—not for storms, as some believers in the “old Adam” seem to think, but for something a little nearer omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. And ever and anon new fuel is added to the fire of his dissatisfaction, whenever he thinks of power or knowledge or ubiquity greater than his own. Consider this and you will see that desire is the mainspring of our progress. Necessity may be the mother of invention, but desire is the mother of our necessities.



## **CONTENTS**

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **THE VISION OF THE GOAL OF LIFE**

Insatiable man—Two kinds of desire—The goal not far away—Perception of the goal—Our subconscious power—Human stalactites and stalagmites—The goal is here.

### **CHAPTER II**

#### **THE ROAD TO THE GOAL OF LIFE**

Living is life—Nature helps—Matter is nothing—Experience is experiment—Painter and picture—What is karma?—The making of future lives—No material evolution.

### **CHAPTER III**

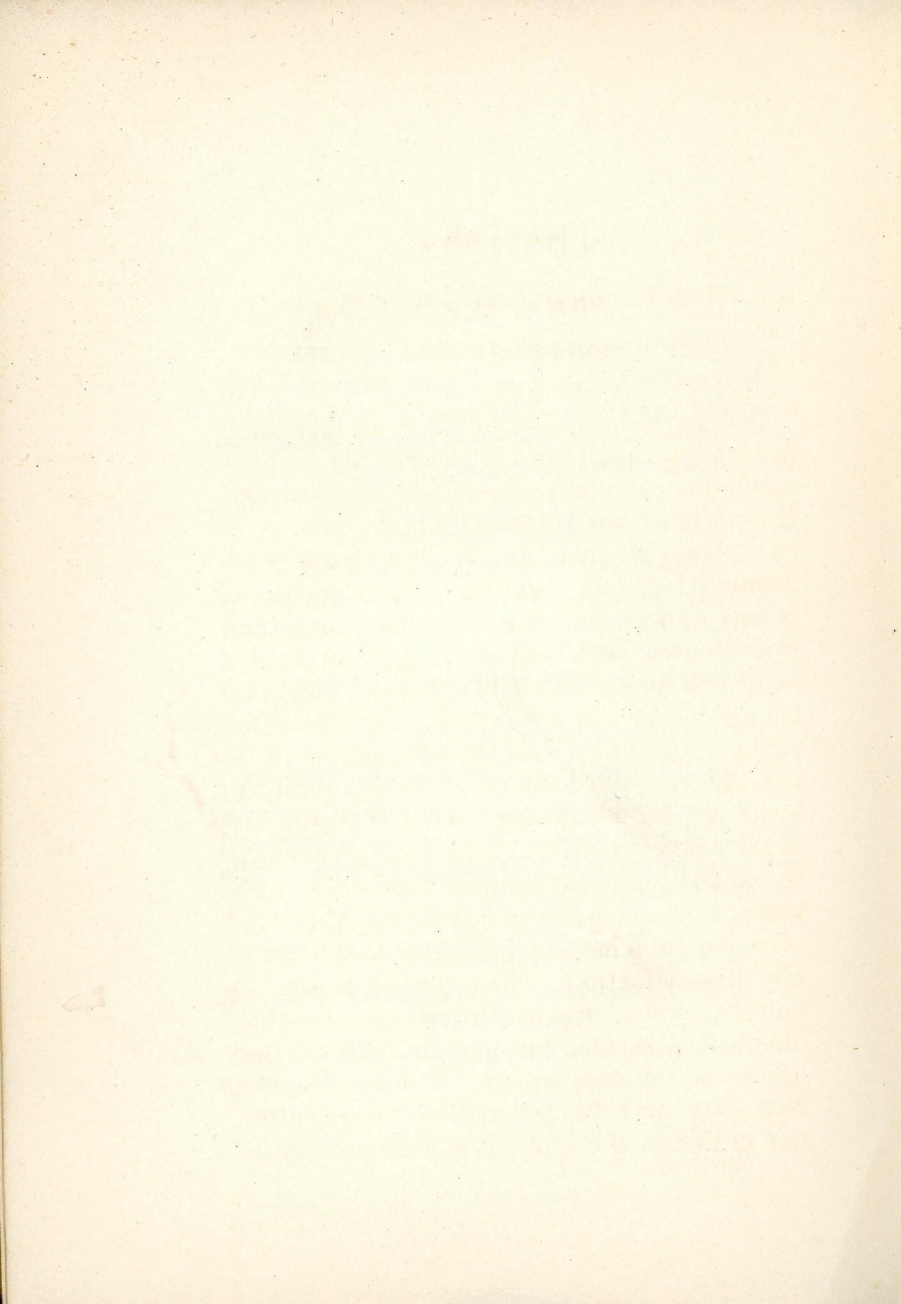
#### **COMPANIONS ON THE ROAD OF LIFE**

Progress and people—Experience and evolution—Lame dogs and stiles—Brotherhood not sentimental—Masters and men—The Master's work.

### **CHAPTER IV**

#### **THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF THE ROAD OF LIFE**

Compensation—Awakenings—The school of life—Initiation or achievement—What do you want?—The four answers—Release of the mind—Release of the heart—Release of the will.



## CHAPTER I

### THE VISION OF THE GOAL OF LIFE

#### *Insatiable Man*

It is agreed on all hands that all men want to be God, that is to say, they want to have omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience. How often have I wished that I could be in two places at once, and if that desire were granted I should want to be in a hundred! It may appear for some little time that a man is contented with smaller things, such as a home and happy wife and children. But this is only a smooth harbor following a troubled voyage, and very soon dissatisfaction (I do not like the word discontent) will raise its head and he will yearn—not for storms, as some believers in the “old Adam” seem to think, but for something a little nearer omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. And ever and anon new fuel is added to the fire of his dissatisfaction, whenever he thinks of power or knowledge or ubiquity greater than his own. Consider this and you will see that desire is the mainspring of our progress. Necessity may be the mother of invention, but desire is the mother of our necessities.

The world would make no impression on a man without desire to seek pleasures or to avoid pains. Therefore desire is something to be cherished, to be encouraged, but at the same time to be studied and understood.

Study the effects of desire in your own character and environment. It is constantly introducing us to new experience. It makes us explorers and inventors in every way—in the unchartered wilderness, in the depth of the ocean, and even in the heights of the air. And experimenters, explorers and inventors also in the great field of emotion and thought, beginning with lust, wrath and greed, and ending with beautiful flowers of human affection when the psychological wildernesses and jungles have been explored and cultivated, and converted into smiling orchards and gardens.

It ought not to be too much trouble to dwell in moments of leisure upon the meaning and use of desire. I know that many people will say, "It is difficult, and our stupid minds see nothing." But go on trying, and not caring whether you succeed or not, and within a week you will see the nature of your desire and whither it is tending. And you will see also that knowledge of this fact is the first step on a swifter road of evolution,<sup>1</sup> that with

this knowledge you can save yourself from wandering miserably in the old paths, from carrying the dark part of your past into what ought to be a brighter future. It makes the difference between rowing a boat and putting up a sail.

### *Two Kinds of Desire*

Desire is of two kinds, according as it is with or without vision. Thus there are desires for the goal and desires by the wayside. And desires by the wayside are of two kinds—attraction and aversions. For example, a man lives in a country place, and he wants to go quickly to a distant city in his car, because that city holds for him the fulfilment of his desire. As he proceeds on his journey there will be two kinds of desires in his mind—desire for the city and desires by the way. He wants to reach the city, to have all that it holds for him, to be all that it can stimulate him into being, but at the same time he wants to avoid as much as possible the deep ruts, the pot-holes and the thorns with which the road is strewn.

From his desires-to-avoid are born by

<sup>1</sup>I prefer the word "evolution" to "progress", because it implies the unfoldment of our own powers, like a bud opening into flower, while "progress" suggests going forward to something which is not already in seed within us.

revulsion temporary forms of contentment, which are the desires by the wayside. He will say (1) "Let me enjoy some sensations, that life may pass tolerably," or (2) "Let me have possessions, so that I may feel some power," or (3) "Let me have the entertainment and support of friends, for there is gaiety, if nothing else." But nobody *really* wants these things, that is, nobody wants them *for ever*.

None of the objects of the wayside are attractive as compared with what the goal has to offer. But many of them appear so to man harassed by the roughness of the way. So after much complaining about the rough condition of the road he will often settle for a while in the peaceful harbor of a wayside hostelry, and say, "There is pleasure here. I will be satisfied with this."

But that satisfaction is only apparent, not real. It is born of his desire-to-avoid. The man still wants the city, but he does not want it more than he fears the road. All pleasure by-the-way is therefore short-lived. As soon as it has been fully tasted its incapacity to satisfy is known. It is inevitably compared with the vision of the goal, so though fear and pride may cause serious delay there is always some progress on the road of life.

Our dissatisfaction is a precious thing. It is caused by our vision of the goal, however dim that may be. Therefore it is a first point of wisdom to be content to be dissatisfied. The vision of the goal gives happiness that runs along with the discontent and entirely changes the taste of it. If we say, with the old Hindu thinker, "To the enlightened all is misery," we know the happiness as well, for our dark earth is lightened with the sun of knowledge of the goal.

Even the best of the desires by the wayside is an aversion. All personal desires, for the excitement or the comfort of sensation, mild or strong, or for possessions and friends, are only refuges. They are sought out and clung to through fear of the open road, as Hamlet preferred the ills he had to others that he knew not of, but feared.

### *The Goal not far Away*

Do not say at the outset: "This goal is too remote for me. This vision is too fantastic. It is concerned with the whole universe and I am only a very tiny part." But ask yourself what you want. Do you want it or do you not want it? If you do want it, you shall have it, though it is universal. Do you not see that there is a false distinction, for the

small things of life are marvellously united with the great whole of life, as the sun may shine into every drop of water. If you examine some small object and study it carefully, with concentrated attention and full thought, giving your time to it ungrudgingly, you will come to understand it, and soon the understanding will be easy. Or if you do the same thing with regard to a person you will come to love him, and the love will become easy. Or if you similarly devote yourself to some work of art, you will become skilled, and it will become easy for you as an artist to draw a straight line with your unguided hand, for nothing develops the will like art. You may think, "Yes, these are the little things with which we have to fill our lives; far removed from the goal of full freedom or power, and full love and understanding, which you call omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence!" What a mistake. By understanding one little thing you gain the power to understand many things and great things; by learning to love one person you gain the power to love innumerable people; by acquiring one accomplishment you develop the will with which you can achieve many things.

Truly the body is a small thing, but it is concerned with great things. What is the

use of the body? I find that even people who hold the body as not themselves nevertheless consider that it enables them to do things, that they can walk about and see the world, with the aid of this body, that it is a vehicle. But I have seen for many years that on the contrary it is a *limiting* instrument. I see with my eyes the contents of a room, and that vision is limited by the surrounding walls. Suppose that suddenly my power of sight went through the walls, and extended itself into every hall and room and street in a big city. The sight would be too much for me. I should stagger with the immensity and the complexity of it all.

Thanks, then, for the *limitations* of the body, which assist me to focus my attention upon a scene within the measure of my present capacity, instead of leaving me wide open to the world, with all the indefiniteness of that state. In these conditions I cannot pay attention to many things at once or in a short time, but I can bring the full power of my will, my affection and my thought to bear upon something small enough for the capacity of my powers of consciousness. Then that capacity grows, in these conditions. The will that has learned to hold its own in one thing will hold it in many things; the love

which has won a triumph of unity between two persons will win the unity of many persons, and the understanding which has grasped the small things will grasp great things. At last the power, the love and the understanding will no longer need the limitation provided by this body, but the life of which they are the conscious powers will stand in its own strength open to the world, to live its own great world-life, in which freedom, unity and understanding blend in one glorious state of conscious being—or I think I must call it superconscious being, since the consciousness that we commonly know is the broken consciousness connected with the sequence of little things.

Do not, then, tell me that this goal is a distant thing. My life has the character of the whole even while it is directed to the part. Many people have a dim vision, which may be called an intuition, of this fact. I knew a lady who used to travel for months and sometimes even for years from her home, and when she came back she always said: "I have a curious feeling that I have been here all the time; I cannot realize that I have been away." I told her that I was quite sure that she had not been entirely away. The same lady when at a distance would sometimes re-

ceive a letter from home, and then say: "I have that curious feeling again; I cannot realize that all the people there are going on with their usual activities without me." The same answer applied, of course.

### *Perception of the Goal*

So do not be shy of your vision of the goal. But watch your perception of it, and take care that the casual perception of the things by the wayside does not cause you to forget your vision of the goal. This is important, because on the road of life this perception all the time governs the desires, which are the energy of life. As desires are of two kinds—to achieve and to avoid, so perception is of two kinds—the casual perception of the things by the wayside, and the reaching-out perception which knows something about the city to which you want to come. The vision of the city whose minarets and domes you can see in the distance determines the direction of your steering, but more than that, and at the same time, it reflects itself into the present, so that the ruts and pot-holes in the road cannot trouble you as they do those whose vision of the city is almost lost.

Picture yourself as an adept, that is to say an adept life, not an adept form, for forms

are only organs, and the function or power of the life produces the organs. The adept life is the constant seer of purpose and beauty, the constant feeler of love and unity, the constant understander of the truth about things and their fleeting relations to the permanent life. Too often adepts are thought of as external forms, as though one should see a beautiful spade digging in a garden and be strangely blind to the existence of the gardener handling that spade. Picture yourself and your goal as one, and know it for a certainty; what then does it matter what the road to that goal may be; that which is certain is almost as good as that which even now exists.

There is no other power to be compared with this perception of the goal. It can fill the present with the fullest life of which we are now capable. Every moment lived and every action done in the light of that goal, is the most profitable moment, the most successful action possible for us. This is a fact that applies to all men, tall or small, young or old. It is the great awakener. It brings the fullness of all our life to a focus upon the part of it with which we are at the moment engaged. It vitalizes desire, which is the

energy of life. It is the vision of God,<sup>1</sup> and our union with God. It is Theosophy, which has been rightly called “an intimate knowledge of divine things”, and “a direct knowledge of God.” The light of the goal gives new significance to everything upon the way, and can in fact transform every trouble into a delight.

### *Our Subconscious Power*

The power of this perception (once we have had it clearly in our minds) is present not only when we are thinking of the goal. By degrees—and sometimes in a flash—it fills all the chambers of the subconscious as well as the conscious mind, like the sunlight which is shining outside, and also diffuses itself through even a small window into every corner of a room. In our delight at the direct sunshine let us not forget that it works its magic also in those dark rooms. Then the perception of the goal will exert its power at all times, whether we are thinking of it or not. The forms which surround us are im-

<sup>1</sup> The use of this word is a concession to popular language. We must not think of a ruler or master of the world. A source—yes, but that is the life, which is also our life. I prefer the term “the divine”, because it is connected with the Sanskrit *div*, which means “to shine”. The divine is that which shines with its own power—not light alone, but any power.

mensely susceptible to its influence, as they are also even to lesser perceptions. For example, it has frequently been observed that adopted children grow to resemble one or other of their foster parents; thinking of them has produced this effect. Even the humble flatfish adds its small quota of testimony to this truth. Lying in the shallow water over the brown sand it becomes brown, over the grey sand it becomes grey. But if that flatfish happens to be blind these changes do not occur.

I believe I see the same effect in communities and nations—that it is some way of thinking common to the group, and the constant perception of one another, which bring about a similarity among them, counteracting considerably all the influences of heredity. Many artists are aware that their work is nation-building work, insomuch as it excites the perception and the conscious or unconscious desire of the people who see it. One striking case was presented by the well-known American artist, Mr. Clarence Underwood, originator of the “school-girl complexion” pictures, who wrote with regard to his own little daughter:

Many years ago I suddenly stopped painting the blonde woman who had dominated my work, and began

to draw a girl. People asked me who she was, and I truly could not tell them. She was certainly not the model that I was using, nor any combination of several models. She was herself, and to me at least an ideal type.

My little daughter Valerie was then six years old and she loved that dark girl intensely. She would come into the studio and stand behind my chair and watch me paint, until discovered and dragged protestingly away.

For years I drew that one face with little variation.

When Valerie was a young lady, some 15 years later, she was the living image of that pictured face, which I had drawn so many years ago. I know that her love and admiration for those pictures were responsible for it.

Old friends of mine when they met my daughter would exclaim at the resemblance, although at the time I painted the picture Valerie was nothing but a baby, with no more semblance to the face on the canvas than I myself had. Her actual looks were changed to conform with a pictured face which she loved, and this same result may happen to any girl. The American girl of today is more nearly the result of the artist's ideal than she herself can possibly know.

I believe also that many of the outside occurrences, opportunities and cataclysms of life are much moved by our perceptions and by our vision of the goal, as well as are our condition of health, strength and beauty of body and mind. There are subtle affinities, and what we seek also seeks us.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For example, the quotation from *The Secret Doctrine* with which I have prefaced this book was discovered in the following way. About a week after I had thought out this book and dictated it to a secretary, and while my thoughts were much upon this viewpoint, which to my mind is the essential and the only real Theosophy, I was travelling on a ferry boat, carrying with me a copy of *The Secret Doctrine*. It occurred to me that it would

*Human Stalactites and Stalagmites*

I see then two kinds of people about me—those who have the vision of the goal and those who have not. Or rather, as this is a relative matter, those who have a great vision of the goal and those who have so little that they do not know that they have any at all. All these people look to me like the contents of a great limestone cave hollowed out by carbonized water—there are many stalactites hanging from the ceiling and many stalagmites standing upon the floor. Some people have their broad base above, others their broad base below. Of those who perceive only the things by the wayside the desires become attached to those things, and their divine energy (for there is no other energy) builds a kind of stalagmite, which, however, cannot help but rise upwards even from that base. Thousands of people try to get to heaven keeping their feet on the earth.

But the man who is stalactitic is he who is

---

be interesting to open it casually and read whatever turned up. I did so, and came straight upon this passage, in which I was glad to find that Mme. Blavatsky entirely endorses the outlook which I have made my own. Many people would regard this as mere chance. I do not believe that. Our lives are full of incidents engineered through various laws worked by our subconscious minds.

broad-based in his vision of the goal and puts down from above his finger of consciousness, concentrated, purposeful, vigorous, clear-sighted, to deal with this thing or with that thing in the light of his vision of the goal. He has to do with many things, but they are all linked together by his one purpose. Think, for example, of an artist who is filled with the desire to paint a beautiful picture—many things have something to do with that one purpose. He rests at night—in order to paint that picture. He gets up in the morning—in order to paint that picture. He washes, dresses, eats his breakfast, buys pencils and colors and canvas, goes to the forest—all in order to paint that picture.

Such a man does not depend for his interest on external stimulus or excitement. He has purpose. But the man who has no desire to understand, but only curiosity (which is desire for sensation), who has no desire for the largeness of life that shows itself by love, who has no purpose, has no concentration. All his divine energy has dripped onto the floor.

### *The Goal is Here*

We may call the goal of life whatever we like. The Chinese have been very wise in

their nomenclature, having the same word for both God and heaven. The goal is not an objective region, nor is it a subjective state. It is the fullness and at the same time the union of my life and the world and the world's life. It is like a picture containing all colors. We are looking at that picture in the world, but in a color-blind way.

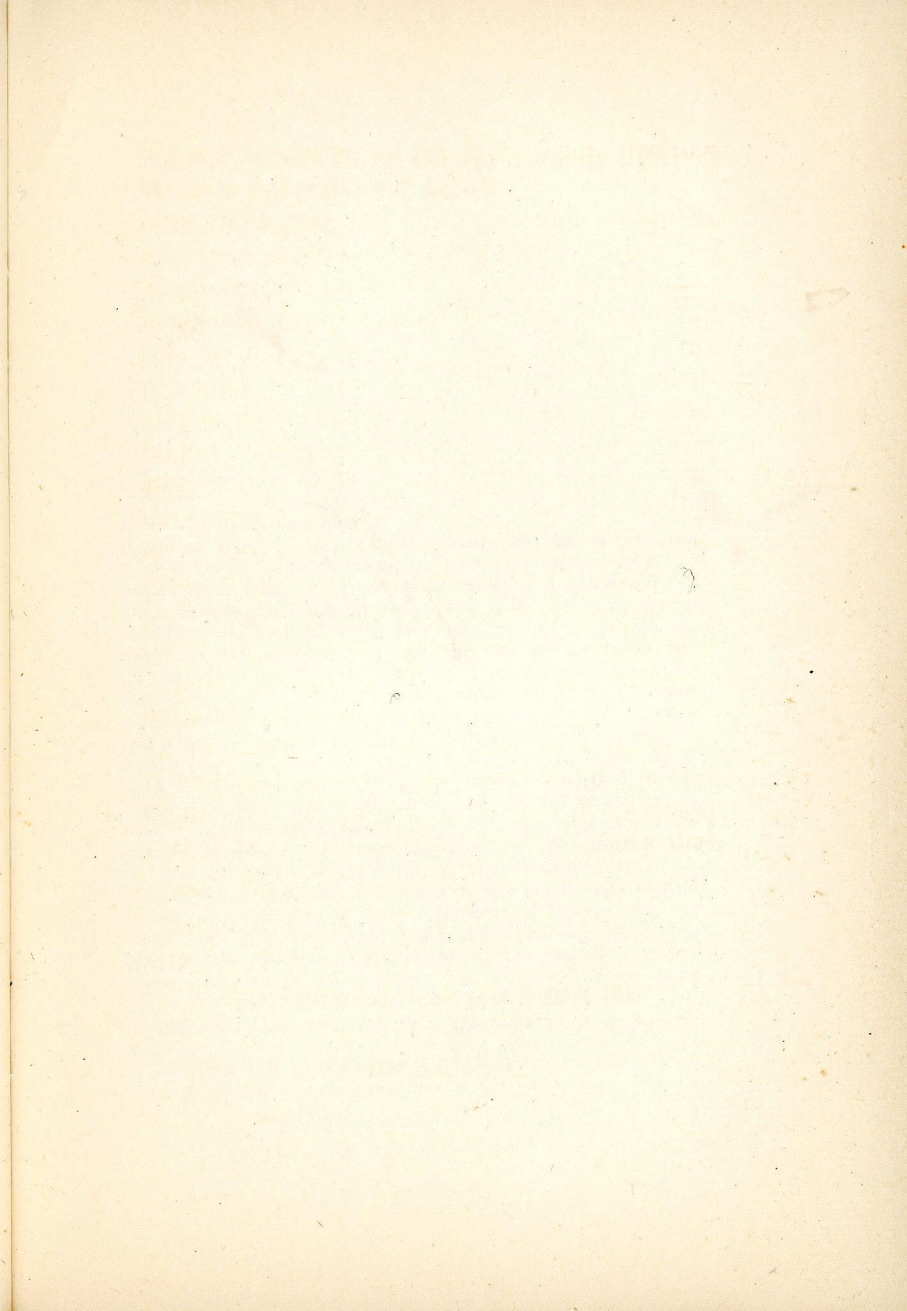
If you look at a picture of many colors and are able to see only, let us say, the red strokes upon the canvas, it will seem chaotic, but when you come to see the other colors it is at once all order and meaning, a thing of unity—therefore of beauty, truth and love, for these are only unity expressed respectively in form, thought and in feeling. There is only one life and only one world, and these two are only one. There is nothing to leave, nothing to lose, but everything to gain. There is no monotony in unity, like the monotony of a row of pins, or the monotony of a shoreless and uninhabited ocean. Uniformity is separateness, but unity implies infinite diversity. The nirvanic plane is here. What we see is a part of that.

What must we do about it? As I wrote in *Concentration* twenty years ago:

If you have said: "I will," then choose what you will have, and the nearer your choice is to the heart of the

Great Law the sooner you will succeed. Give reign to your fancy and picture to yourself the liberty, and the might, and the love, and the knowledge that will be yours. Your chariot shall be the lightning flash, and your raiment the splendor of the sun, and your voice shall be the thunder of the spheres. The divinest knowledge shall be your food, and the ethereal blue your home. Yours shall be the strength of mountains, the power of the tempest, the force of the ocean, the beauty of the sunrise, the triumph of the noonday sun, the liberty of the wind, the gentleness of the flowers, the peace of the evening twilight, the purity of eternal snow.

First of all believe in your own immortality, then realize that the future is full of splendor without limit, of achievement beyond and beyond, and beyond again, the most avaricious dreams of imagination, and that that achievement is a matter for your choosing now. Death is but a trifling episode in our age-long life. Through its portal we go as one rises from a bed of sickness to go out into the sunshine. If we set our hearts upon the superhuman things, then we shall achieve. If we fix our ambitions in human life, these, also, we shall attain in constant rebirth. Believe in your own immortality; give wings to your imagination; say: "This is within my reach, I *WILL ACHIEVE*"—and success will come sooner than you expect.



## CHAPTER II

### THE ROAD TO THE GOAL OF LIFE

#### *Living is Life*

The road to the goal of life is—living. Living is creative work. Creative work may be mental, emotional or physically material. It may be for oneself or others, which is only another way of saying you may have an audience of one or many.

Some people accept established customs—in dress, manners, business and religion—because this leaves them leisure to think, and saves them from exhaustion of planning new ways and going against the stream of ordinary life. Some on the contrary accept traditional ways of thinking, because this makes smooth the path of social intercourse and self-expression in the corner of society to which they happen to belong, and opens the door to the enjoyment of the many pleasures which it contains. But as thinking is for living and living is for undertaking—not mere sensation, except on the surface—both these lack the character and benefit of creative work or real living.

Such people go on for their whole lifetime

making the same mistakes, the theorists or spectators losing the corrective of experimental experience and the butterflies losing the corrective of interested thought. But thought and action combine in creative living, and between these two the emotions become pure and sweet. Creative living awakens more and more the ego, the "I am," so that each moment is full of life and growth. The creative liver may be a statesman, philanthropist, philosopher, interpreter, scientist, devotee or artist, with an audience of one or many, with canvas as small as his own skin or as large as the world, but whatever may be his metier he really lives, while the imitators, the copyists, the conformists are relatively dead all the time—they tread the paths of animal, vegetable or mineral life, not that of man. It is better to be a man painting on a small canvas than a human fungus covering the world.

The objects or forms which surround us on that road are objects to be lived with. Just as an architect might find himself in a remote South Sea Island, where he would busy himself building beautiful and useful houses with the materials from the palm trees and grasses within his reach, or might find himself in a modern city with steel girders, and

electric rivetting machines, cement and iron and glass to his hand, and there he would build another kind of house, so each man finds himself among objects with which he can live. The objects do not constitute the life. The living constitutes the life, for life is dynamic. Perhaps it would be better if we talked about "my living," instead of "my life," for living is life. Life cannot stand still.

### *Nature Helps*

There is a double conspiracy to promote our living or our life. There is life's hunger for its own fullness, which we have already considered, and then there is the world's law of destruction or perishing. Not that the world really destroys; it is the life that has made everything that has been made, and when the life is withdrawn from that which has been made in order to give its attention to something else, that object begins to decay. For life is concerned not only with creation, but also with preservation of the forms. And what we call destruction is a still deeper law of the life, by which it stimulates itself to new efforts, to greater and more successful expression of its powers in the building of forms.

If a man builds a house, that is the result of his thought and energy. Life has built the house. But when the work is complete and he ceases building, the house begins to decay. Therefore, even before he has a vision of the goal and understands the value of full living, and while he is still attached to the objects by the wayside for their own sake, or for what he thinks to be the permanent enjoyment of those things, he is still being caused to employ and exercise and therefore to develop the powers of his life. He himself becomes more in the process, for though his houses perish one after another, he remains, a better, wiser, stronger man, ready to build still better houses and to become a still better, wiser, stronger man.

*Matter is Nothing*

In all this, the life is everything and the matter is nothing. What have we to do with matter? We have to do with forms, and we know those forms. Those forms belong to the life that is living everywhere, and not to any matter of which we have any conception. Let it be seen that we are in a world consisting solely of expressions of life. Ninety per cent of the things with which the average civilized man lives—his houses and their

furniture, his streets and vehicles, his food and clothing, from the confines of his home and family to the expanse of his nation and humanity—all these are man-made things, expressions of human life. And inasmuch as people make according to what they are, and a bad carpenter makes a bad table and a good carpenter a good table, so are all these man-made objects photographs, as it were, of the life that made them. The world of forms in which we are living is a world of life. Every man makes the whole of his life or world—through direct action or through brotherhood.

See then, the importance of life. The life is everything and everywhere; the matter is nothing or at least no thing. And the forms with which we are surrounded are a little of the life. Life in this world—what we call incarnation or embodiment—is really a process of concentration and meditation. Imagine yourself coming to a great city and wishing to understand its life. You could not do so all at once. You would concentrate. You would say: "Let me inspect first the postoffice, then the shops, then the hospital"—and so on. You would concentrate on one part at a time, within the measure of your capacity. When you had fixed your atten-

tion upon one such object and thus marked out the boundaries of your present activity you would proceed to meditate upon it, by which I mean to say that you would observe it fully and give your full flow of thought to the understanding of everything within the boundary drawn by that act of concentration.

That is what we are doing when we "incarnate." It is a kind of active or practical meditation. There are always three steps in the process—first concentration, then meditation until we have known the thing as fully as we can, and then contemplation of that full thing. It is the meditation that gives knowledge which is power, and contemplation then causes us to reject the object and take away the power for use upon another or larger object, like the bee that takes the honey from the flower.<sup>1</sup> All our life is thus meditation. We are seeing our own thoughts. But it is a very real meditation, in which thoughts become things.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Consider this in connection with current information as to life after death, and it will be seen that that is the completion of the meditation and contemplation unfinished in the body, yet related to the concentration or experiences in that body. (See my *Intuition of the Will*, Ch. V).

<sup>2</sup> It is not without significance that Mme. Blavatsky constantly calls enlightened and powerful monads

*Experience is Experiment*

Observe again that the life is everything because the forms are experimental. There is no world of material form, having a system, a plan, an order of its own, which awaits us, to teach us some lesson from the outside.<sup>1</sup> We are not explorers in a foreign land. All these forms with their qualities or properties are the expressions of our life within the delimitation of our acts of concentration. In other words, all experience is experimental. We have made these things, and we are looking at them and seeing what they are like. We are discovering their unsatisfactoriness, their inadequacy, their inequality to the intent of our being. The rich clearness of reality with which they stand before us

---

“Dhyân Chohans” or “Lords of Meditation (Dhyâna)” or “Dhyânîs,” which means those who have meditated, as “Yogîs” are properly those who have united.

<sup>1</sup> The apparent system of races, rounds, etc., is due to the fact that the monads evolve in a certain way, not that this scheme is fixed for them by someone else. If the “Third Logos” planned the worlds in which we live, we planned them. The Logos is not other than the collectivity of monads, which is the unity of monads, so *there is no being working upon us externally, that is, through forms which he has made and we have not made.* A scheme made for us by somebody else would destroy our freedom (and thus negate the fundamental postulate of Theosophy) as effectually as would interference with our wills if that were possible.

makes us eager to have that rich clearness of reality in the full extent of the life that we are but which we have not yet expressed to ourselves in full strength and clearness. It is all experiment—like that of a man who has made a motor-car and now tries it out on the road, and finds many ways in which it is incomplete and unsatisfactory—it rattles, it smokes, it runs crooked, it is too slow. Such are the things that we are constantly saying to ourselves. The wise man, learning through experience, does not separate himself from the world, he say to himself: "I rattle, I smoke, I run crooked, I am too slow."

### *Painter and Picture*

This is the essential meaning of what in India has so long been called *karma*. Many people all over the world say that they believe in *karma*. They mean that a man cannot reap as he has not sown, that nothing can happen to any one of us of pleasure or of pain except as he has caused it to happen to himself by his own actions in the past. In connection with this there is often too much thought about the pleasure and the pain, and about what is sometimes called the opportunity and the lack of opportunity which these things give. Every moment there is

the very fullness of opportunity, because we have made our own environment. The painter painted a picture yesterday. Is not that picture, whatever it may be, his opportunity for to-day? Will he not look at it this morning and see some of its imperfections, which are his own imperfections that he would never have felt or seen if he had not painted that picture yesterday? And now, when he tries again, setting aside those imperfections, will he not paint a better picture to-day, because he has had before him his work of yesterday? He must be a better painter at the end of a piece of work than he was at the beginning of it, because his powers have grown in the process, so the picture helps him to develop his capacity and to enlarge or improve his vision at the same time.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All the world is eager to do creative work. As opportunities of education, leisure and freedom from set forms in every department of life increase, the life so freed burgeons delightedly into creative activity of innumerable kinds. There are thousands of students and inventors where there were tens, and whatever anybody may say thousands also of great writers, singers, speakers, painters, etc., where there were ten. This does not reduce the audience or the market, as might at first appear, because capacity to receive and collective life are increasing at the same time. But in any case an audience of one is sufficient for the unselfish man. Not only man shows this inner law—no two horses, no two flowers, no two atoms are alike, as they would be if they were stamped from the die of another's thought.

Our world is our work; it is nothing else. It calls us to new self-expression, which is greater realization of ourselves. This world is not more than we are; it is less than we are. So, if there were a God, he would be more connected with our inner life than our outer forms. But the idea is inconsistent with our knowledge. This is a world of life engaged in building forms, not a world of forms which become vehicles of life. You cannot put life in a form as you can put water in a cup. Water rests in the cup because it is of the same nature as the cup. But the relation between the life and the form is that the life handles the form as a gardner handles a spade. While he is handling the spade he cannot very well write a letter with a pen. He concentrates upon one thing at a time, but in each case it is the life that is everything. The garden does not compel him to dig; the letter does not compel him to write.

In the course of a lifetime (or rather a bodytime) a man makes and uses his forms, as though a pianist should make first his piano, then play upon it, wear it out and cast it aside. It is only a matter of time before even that which is called death will be seen to have a psychological cause. Even now no

scientist can tell us what is the cause of death or when comes the moment of death. That is because the moment of death is decided not physiologically but psychologically, by the man or by the life, which can leave the body when it determines, at various stages of its decrepitude. Animals die easily but men die with difficulty, or reluctantly, because they have more purpose.

Once I was sitting with a friend who had been lying abed at death's door for many days, suffering from an incurable disease. There was present a man who was or thought himself to be somewhat clairvoyant. He said that he could see our sick friend standing outside his body, looking at it very dolefully. Our friend had been greatly unwilling to die. There was some eager desire of his which was unfulfilled, and though it was quite clear to the rest of us that that body was so far broken that even if he got better he would never be able to do with it what he wanted to do, he was still hanging on to it in suffering and sorrow. Then I said: "Let us reason with him. Let us advise him to break the link from his side and let the body go." The advice was given to the man standing outside his body. He accepted it, and within two or three minutes the body was dead.

And then the man who was, or thought he was clairvoyant saw an amused smile come over the face of the man who was "dead," as he said: "Listen here and I'll tell you something. Death is nothing, just nothing at all."

*What is Karma?*

Life is everything. Even the forms are life, though they are only a bit of the life, instead of the whole of the life. So he who would travel with swiftness the road to the goal of life must understand that living is the travelling of that road. This means that you do what you can with what you have—that you do not wait for anything, that you do not imagine that you need opportunity, or that *karma* can stand in your way. The literal meaning of the word *karma* is work, and it is to be taken in the way in which a carpenter would use it if he said: "This table is my work; this chair is my work." These objects which we call our environment, our world, are our work. There can be no injustice in a world of such forms. There cannot be the dreadful injustice of stark retribution, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But there is the marvellous justice that we live in our own world, and so learn. If, for example, I have been cruel in the past,

that expresses my character, with such completeness as it has, and also with such incompleteness—in this case with some completeness of power but great incompleteness of love. And now I meet with cruelty. It is my own cruelty facing myself and it shows me the unsatisfactoriness of a life of cruelty. It helps to awaken my understanding and sympathy.

There is immeasurable benefit to be drawn from our experiences, whatever they may be. I recollect an example of this truth which was given to me many years ago by an old *paradeshi* of South India. This gentleman was blind and also penniless. Sometimes he lived in a very primitive cottage which had been put up for him by some friendly villagers, and where a very old woman would cook a little food for him, but more often he wandered from village to village over a considerable area. This man was by no means ignorant or unintelligent, but could converse lucidly on a great variety of subjects. He was also a master of certain psychic powers, and showed me again and again that when he chose to do so he could see what was happening at a distance, although he was totally blind.

He told me one day that in addition to

these clairvoyant powers he had the capacity to look back in memory into past lives, and thereby he explained to me the cause of his blindness and poverty. It was due, he said, to the fact that when he had been living some eight hundred years before as a rich man, in the neighborhood of Delhi, he had been cruel and vindictive. His present troubles were the outcome of that, but he did not regret them in the least, because in the course of his helpless wanderings he had made many kind friends, and he said that the human affection which he now gave and received contained happiness such as he had not known and would never have known had he continued in his old condition of wealth and power. But of course he would not have the same experience again, because with his newly developed character along the lines of love he could not himself perform the old cruelty any more, even though he might again become a rich man.

### *The Making of Future Lives*

This was a good example of the way in which *karma* always presents the best opportunity for the exercise of our life, for efforts of thought, love and will. It is only such efforts that make for progress on the

road to the goal of life. Obviously, then, the road is long in proportion to our failure to make such efforts. I am not proposing that anyone should live in a state of strain. There is a certain wise degree of effort which each of us can find if he measures his own strength. The question is: "Are we quietly turning our attention to the goal of life and to the meaning of experience in the light of that goal, or are we instead passing our time, or even our 'spare time,' in the indulgence of sensual and selfish thought." It must be one or the other. There is no question of strain, but there is a question as to which way our faces are turned.

Let us suppose that a waking week consists of a hundred hours. Are we spending ninety-nine hours each week in idleness, selfishness or carelessness, and only one hour with our faces turned towards the goal? If that is so, is it not obvious that we are *making future time* for ourselves, that we are carrying forward to another week those ninety-nine ill-spent hours? Let me put this in terms of reincarnation. Some of my friends have an idea that many people require 777 lives in which to complete their human evolution, from start to finish. This implies that if they had not on the average

spent 776 out of every 777 minutes of the day in non-essentials, that is, with their faces not turned towards the goal, but had made full use of every minute, they would have completed the task in one life.

Time ill-spent is time created for the future, for the living which you might do now you are simply putting off into the future. In such ways men are making a long, long road for themselves and dooming themselves to wander in comparative misery for many incarnations. Our future incarnations are not a necessity, but they mark our failure.<sup>1</sup> There will come a time when we shall live one life without turning our faces away from the goal. It will be a very perfect life on earth, though it may deal with very little things, as the world counts littleness. In those things we shall never be shaken from understanding, love and pur-

<sup>1</sup> Reincarnation is the perfect opposite of the hell-fire theory. Many who hold that view state that we deserve to be punished for not taking the opportunity put before us by Christ! The Orientals are kinder, because the hells they propose are temporary, and are very literal punishments for particular sins, as when the lascivious man is doomed to embrace a red-hot statue of a woman, or a dealer in meat is pecked by crows with iron beaks. But reincarnation is a kind theory, for it announces that men will have their opportunity again and again until at last they take it.

pose, all of which spring from the vision of the goal.

### *No Material Evolution*

Evolution is travelling the road to the goal of life. It is the unfoldment of the powers of the life. There is no material evolution. If it appears to be so, that is only because the life is producing a better form to-day than it produced yesterday. If we were to keep a gallery of the pictures painted by an artist, all arranged in chronological order, we should see quite clearly that number one had not evolved into number two, or number two into number three. There is an evolution of the pictures, but only because there is an evolution of the painter. There is not even material causality among the forms. They are merely objects in space, defined by their dimensions in space, and they have no power to step out of the space in which they are. The changes that occur in time are brought about by a superior reality, which is the power of the life expressing itself in these forms.

There is then only one royal road to the goal of life. It is the natural road of positive living. Men are busy making it long because they are afraid of life. In our literature we

have often used the simile of a broad road winding round a mountain and rising spirally to the top. On this the millions toil, while a few take a steep path which goes straight up the mountain side. But the straight path is the natural path—the winding path is the unnatural, for men make messes of their lives as they make messes of their food. We have man-made health, which is disease, man-made clothing, which is ugly, uncomfortable and unhygienic, man-made laws which are bondage, man-made religions, which separate us from the good or God. All because men are afraid of life, and cling too closely to the form, which is not in itself their natural life, which could be simple, true, beautiful, and strong.

## CHAPTER III

### COMPANIONS ON THE ROAD OF LIFE

#### *Progress and People*

An old proverb says that the worst is the perversion of the best. Man can be more cruel than the tiger. A motor accident or an aeroplane crash is worse than the tumble of a running man. Therefore a superstition, which is perversion, is most dangerous, and the greater the truth connected with it the more carefully must its application be studied and watched. This is my preface to a study of human brotherhood in its three forms, which are (1) our relation to our equals or companions by the way, (2) our relation to the unfortunates, the weak and the ignorant, and (3) our relation to the superior persons or teachers.

First let us see the object in view in all such relationships. All Theosophists will agree that this is the same for all people. It is their evolution. Evolution is said to be the result of experience. But that is not so. A cat cannot learn from a king, nor a fool from a wise man. Experience does not give us evolution. It is the use of our powers—

our thought, will and love—upon any experience which produces evolution. Our powers evolve themselves by exercise, or better still, by exertion.

Next, evolution is individual. In theological terms, God is fulfilling himself in each man—otherwise there would be no point in that man's existence. But it is not necessary to be theological in the matter, because we can see what is happening in any country. You cannot by process and act of parliament invent a dynamo or aeroplane, or discover the electron, or paint the most beautiful picture. Every original achievement—a little part or a big part of any discovery or invention, is due to the evolution of the powers of an individual, which in turn was due to his exertion of those powers. That country is most progressive which gives most opportunity for individual freedom in the exercise of those powers, not that which drills its citizens like common soldiers, who, though well trained, are notoriously unintelligent. If to-day it can no longer be said with accuracy, as it could in former times, that the history of a nation may be written in the biography of a few individuals, that is because with the advancement of liberty our nations are seething with geniuses—there

are too many to mention, so that we do not even know who is the inventor of many most useful articles, or who is the originator of most important elements in our social code. Can you say who invented or discovered matches, pins, rubber, the carburetor, the dynamo or artificial silk?

If you want further evidence that experience is not evolution, but that evolution is due to our living or our treatment of experience, consider the bluebottle. I do not know whether in the privacy of its own apartments it toils or spins, but when it spends its time among my works of art and science it does not appear to profit particularly thereby. Similarly, when a party of tourists is taken to see the great dynamos at Niagara Falls, no doubt they are much impressed by the mighty power of those revolving drums, and the whirring, singing sound, but have they in their minds the thousandth fragment of the picture which would be in Edison's mind were he standing in that place? Not if they stand there filled with the greatest awe and admiration for a thousand years will they advance one step nearer to it, but the humble student who uses his intelligence gradually comes to understand. Nor do I think, turning to another aspect of human

activity, that great love, and ultimately, if we like to call it so, even God's love, can be approached or realized except through the study and practice of common good-will.

I knew a scientific man who was in charge of a large radio station, who was so impressed by a new valve which had come out that he told me he felt that he could go down on his knees and worship it. The other people there would have thought those valves to be only "funny bottles" if they had not been told that they were the means of sending out messages for many thousands of miles around. There was all the difference in the world between their awe and what he called his worship, which was admiration due to understanding, which was full of joy, freedom and power. This is the enthusiastic religion which a thinker of last century called "the flowering and completion of human culture," the temples which God builds in the heart of man, on the ruins of creeds and of religions.

We have electric light. What we do with it alone determines our progress, not what it does. To one man it is a means to self-indulgence and dissipation. Next door a student, who has no leisure during the day, uses it with knowledge in view. Similarly,

the presence, the light and the force of a teacher can also be used in both these ways. All light, all experience, belongs to environment, not to evolution, which is in individual hands.<sup>1</sup> In some parts of India where I sometimes live we still use a candle or an oil lamp. The moth makes one use of my candle, the lizard and the frog another. The moth flies into the flame. The frog and the lizard run and jump around and eat the remains. I see many who use the idea of the Master as the moth uses my candle, and I think that is one reason why the Masters have to make themselves so scarce. The question is—do you want light, or sight? Which is it? The light of life is everywhere; it is the power of sight that we need to seek.

The same principle applies in the region of our emotions and our thoughts. We do not want to explain away our difficulties, but we want to understand them so as to have the power to dissolve them. If I am indignant when I see injustice done, a theosophical friend who has missed the point of Theosophy takes hold of my waistcoat button

<sup>1</sup> Co-operation or organization consolidates our material gains. It does not create, and more often than not it stifles the genius who would carry the work beyond its standardized forms.

and "reasons" with me. He says, "But do not you see that there is no injustice. This person is only suffering on account of his own misdeeds in the past. And no one can suffer without such cause. So be calm, for everything is all right. If the suffering is yours, suffer in silence and be comforted with the thought that the clouds must roll by and a better day will come." This is superstition, the perversion or misapplication of a truth. *Karma* is what we have made. The carpenter has made a table. Now let him use it or exchange it for something else. And if he does not like it, let him alter it. This is the truth and the value of *karma*. There are emotional and mental dissipations and idle luxuriousness as well as physical. Religions are saturated with such consolations, which create fools' paradises which last for a long time.

### *Lame Dogs and Stiles*

The same principle applies also to gifts. Someone asks: "But what of Russia's millions of starving children? Did we not carry food to them across three thousand miles of ocean? And was it not good to do so?" Of course, if it was intelligent, if it was loving, for these are life, or rather living, and only living is good. It was an act of

brotherhood towards the unfortunate and weak, in our second class. All brotherhood in this class is of temporary utility. We feed the destitute only that they may become strong enough to feed themselves. And we teach the ignorant so that in future we shall not need to teach them because they will not need to be taught. These things are not gifts, but our contribution to the common work. We have received from mankind; now let us do our share of giving. Those Russian children will owe more to the man or men who have taught or will teach the Russians to live, that is to say, to use their intelligence, their love and their energy, and use them all together, so that such a state of desperate need may never occur again.

Similarly in the great Japanese earthquake of 1923 the Americans instantly conveyed great help to the stricken people, who were as helpless as the victims of a railway accident, and could resort only to the virtues of courage, fortitude and endurance. They helped a lame dog over a stile, but nobody suggests, except in some religious circles, that the lame dog should be carried all along the road.

There are special times in which we can help one another, as the expression is, but

let us recognize that those who are being helped are not at the moment making progress, are not themselves evolving. They are merely being "saved." There may be some personal satisfaction which I would call emotional dissipation, in carrying a lame dog all along the road, but in that case, there is no progress either for the carrier or for the dog. It may be argued that there is affectionate feeling, and that that involves living and evolution. But people who carry lame dogs all along the road usually do so to gratify their own feelings, not for real love. They must have someone to help, or they are at a loss to know what to do with themselves. But the true test of the living which is love is in association with those who do not need our help. It is easy to be kind to the unfortunate, the ignorant, the inferior, because that at the same time ministers to our pride, but what is much more needed is kindness to equals in ordinary life.

If you have reason to go to a doctor, he may possibly give you two things—pills for your indigestion and wisdom for you to think about. Quite frequently the latter is forgotten, or I must say, in justice to the doctors, is not wanted, and would be resented. Our doctors know quite well that

most of our diseases and ill-health are not natural, but the result of idleness, indulgence, disordered imagination and sensuality—in other words they are all superstitions, physical, emotional and mental. Sometimes this is recognized, as when a certain little boy went into a chemist's shop and piped forth: "Please sir, mother wants a bottle of indigestion mixture, because we are going to have crumpets in our house to-morrow!" All help is medicine. If I were a doctor I should be a poor man, for I would give wisdom with my pills. It is said that in civilized lands, as they are called, our doctors have caused more disease than they have cured, but this must not be misunderstood. It means that people become less careful about their health because they think that the doctor is there to cure them, or at least to relieve them of their pain. Let the man think that he can live without exertion (that is to say, can enjoy sensations without true living) and it is all up with him. Cannot people recognize that every step upwards is self-taken, that we can receive help in all outside things, but not in growth or evolution? The only thing of *permanent* value that the doctor can supply is his wisdom, and that cannot be given, it must be received.

All life is like learning a language. To learn it we must speak it, and badly at first. If someone else speaks for us until we can speak well we shall never speak well. Every helper becomes a parasite unless his help is for the moment, and is in the nature of exchange, or his contribution to the common lot. It is this exchange that constitutes true brotherhood; it is not gift, except in so far as our contribution to the common lot of things is made in the spirit of gift, without thinking of the particular return or the particular exchange that we shall receive, though we know full well that it must be received.

*Brotherhood not Sentimental*

We need not make brotherhood sentimental in order to fill it full of happy good-will and affection. It is best based on the theory of exchange, for fair exchange is ensured by the law, anyhow, and it hurts nobody's feelings. Madame Blavatsky used to say that people never forgive those whom they have injured, and it is almost equally difficult to forgive those who have helped us. The old Hindu theory was that a gift should always be made absolutely freely, as the Americans would say "without any strings to it," even

in thought or feeling. If the gift is true, I have no sense of being a giver. If the help is genuine, I have no thought of being a helper. It is all too natural for that. And if in India the recipient does not say "Thank you" it is because he does not want to offend me with what is practically an accusation of selfishness. He receives as freely as I give, and in return he will give as freely as he has received. Though we recognize that brotherhood is based on fair exchange we need not bargain. It is better to live more universally and trade with the cash of love.

The power of brotherhood depends on individuality. There is no brotherhood in a row of pins. Football is better education than rowing, because in the latter you simply pull together, but in the former you use individual intelligence as well. I would not call rowing team work; it is nearer slavery. Yet there is all the difference in the world between individuality and selfishness—let us not confuse them. I may be interested in the welfare of my family, my community, my country. My individuality is all the greater and all the stronger for that. Selfishness is the narrow individuality of one who is really interested in nothing outside his own skin, except in so far as it affects what is inside

that skin. Human individuality can be as strong as cheese and yet as big as the world. Individualities cross without interference like rays of light. They are without bounds. In each a universal character and impulse shine forth, for each is a centre without a circumference.

Brotherhood leads to organized work, and what we have of this in the world shows what its power might easily be. Brotherhood is a sort of divine arithmetic, in which two and two do not make four, but forty, four hundred or even four thousand. **Be**cause we have some of it in the world the average person can now enjoy the use in a single day of things which he could not have made for himself, living alone in a separate world, in ten thousand years. Brotherhood is the expression of our inward unity, and is such that the power of many is reflected in each man's life. Some day it will be the power of all. How marvellous will human life be when nearly all men have learned to put their very best talent into the common stock, when men cease to resist that which is natural. But each man grows by what he puts into the common stock, not by what he takes out of it. His effort in contributing develops his capacity to receive. Without

any capacity you would sleep blissfully through apparently empty time and space, where others with capacity would find varied and busy life. Individuals share achievements when they are more or less at the same level, and their capacity to share depends upon their making their own contribution.

Brotherhood is so great and so deep a truth that it can never be entirely escaped. Personal likes and dislikes are both swept into its service. There are no enemies. All human contacts are beneficial. The man who hurts our feelings or puts obstacles in the way of our plans or presents to our vision the ugliness of dissipation or cruelty has his high uses. He teaches me very forcibly what not to do, as others teach me what to do. And if gratitude is owing to the one, it is also due to the other. I might say: "Thank you, friend, you have done that for me, so that now I need not do it. You have saved me some of the misery of future lives." And if somebody injures me, as the common idea is, I think I might reasonably go down on my knees and beg his pardon, for if that had not been coming to me, he could not have found himself in that unhappy state.

It is for this reason that loyalty to persons is wrong in principle. I have known some

people whom I would call great, but have found in each case that there was something to learn of what not to do. Like everybody else they are here to learn, and since all people, even to the very threshold of human perfection, are engaged in getting rid of their faults, and displaying them in the process, no one is an objective ideal. Besides, each man has his own talent, his own experience, his own problem. Edison cannot be the leader of inventors, because there are other inventors, and many of them have arisen in places where even he would have least expected them. He may be the greatest inventor—but that is another matter. He cannot invent everything, and the others will come nearest to new truths when they are least like sheep. Let us clearly recognize the difference between leaders and great people. All men are our friends, but no men are our masters. We meet in our bodies like leaves upon a tree. The same one life vitalizes all, and by that we are united, not by any strings tied from one leaf to another. The tree holds together by its own one life, and needs no veil or net cast over it to prevent its falling apart.

*Masters and Men*

The theosophical world seems to be dividing itself on the old question: which is more important for educative purposes, environment or character? Nobody of any consequence has ever suggested that character can be implanted by environment. No Theosophist proposes the method of the builder, which assumes that a man evolves as a house is built, that he is a vacant site to which you bring various materials and there build them up into a house. Nor the method of the sculptor, which assumes that human character is crude stone and someone must from the outside chip away the unwanted portions, just as a sculptor takes a block of stone and leaves a statue, which in a sense was in the stone all the time. Thousands of forms were in that stone; the sculptor chooses one. But every man is a living being with a character of his own.

If we speak of Masters we do not mean builders of men or sculptors of men, but we mean gardeners or teachers who recognize that they are dealing with life, that every seed will grow according to its kind, that both the pattern that is to be made and the power with which it is to be built come from

within the seed itself. Therefore no one of any consequence has ever suggested that Masters can give life to anybody or can evolve anybody or can help anybody to evolve themselves. They can give money, and have been known to do so. And they can give thought-forms. But they cannot give growth or evolution, understanding or love or power. The Theosophical Society has the same function as the Masters. Its purpose is not to attempt to feed the people, but to call their attention to great truths with which they can feed, clothe, shelter, amuse and educate themselves as men, without the suffering which they have been bringing upon themselves so long. Its first object—brotherhood—is to be understood in this deep and essential way. Greater than any gift is the offering of wisdom.

Consider understanding. It is one of the powers of our life. It is tested by power, for if I have made a machine, and it will not work, that tells me that my undertaking was wrong. Now let me tell a story about thought-power which is vouched for by some good and honorable friends. In a certain city in America there was over a deep gully a bridge which came popularly to be known as "suicide bridge," because from it a number

of people threw themselves to destruction every year. A group of friends who were accustomed to experimenting with thought-power decided to meet once a week, fix their attention upon that bridge, and think thoughts of cheerfulness, strength and hope. They told me that since they had begun the practice, which was about two years before, there had not been a single suicide from that bridge. I cannot personally vouch for their accuracy, but I can easily believe in such an occurrence because I have had other experiences of the power of thought.

What would happen in this case? The thought-form acts as one speaking; it says: "Come now, things are not as bad as they have appeared, and besides there is a possibility of happy life which you really want. Please do not lose your balance, but consider the facts." Reason prevails, and the would-be suicide changes his mind. The thought-form reminds him at a critical moment of ideas which had been obscured in his troubled mind. This is good work, of course, in the way of lifting a lame dog over a stile, but now there is life to be lived and it must live in its own strength. Every teacher recognizes that however simple may be the idea which he is putting before his class, no

student will grasp it until he has made some effort of attention and of thought. There is a moment between the hearing of his words or the seeing of the experiment that he is doing, and the student's understanding. In that moment the student thinks, and nobody can do it for him.

Consider in the same way the work of an artist. With skill he produces beauty. Beauty is the test of skill, as power is the test of knowledge, and both these come from inward effort alone. Painting pictures for a man who has no hands will not make him into a painter—or even for a man who has hands. Carrying babies does not teach them to walk. On the contrary. I knew a naughty little boy who when about four years old would insist upon being carried up hill when out for a walk. He had been carried too much. Similarly, the guiding lines given to us when we are learning to write prevent us from writing straight, because they teach us to think that they are necessary. Only a few days ago I was writing a letter on an unruled writing block. Suddenly I said to myself: "Why, I am writing straight, without lines!" From that moment my writing became crooked. Such is the power of suggestion. Crutches are only for cripples. You do not

teach a baby to walk with crutches. If people think they *need* a Master, by that thought they destroy their own power and delay their own progress. If they think they could do better with a Master than without one, it is the same thing. If they could, He would be there. There are two kinds of persons to whom the Masters cannot communicate their contribution to the common brotherhood—those who cannot get on with them and those who cannot get on without them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Masters work behind the scenes, and are not out of touch with any part of life. Some one wrote to Madame Blavatsky and asked to be put in connection with the Brothers. Her reply was: "Do you know so little of the laws of Their order as not to understand that by this very act of yours—which was entirely unsolicited and a spontaneous proof of your loyalty—you have drawn their attention to you already, and that you have established relations with them yourself? ..... It is not within our power to do anything for you more. Occultism is not like Christianity, which holds out to you the false promise of mediatorial interference and vicarious merit. Every one of us must work his own way up towards the Brothers. If you want to see Them, act so as to compel Them to let you do so. They are equally with all of us subject to the laws of attraction and repulsion; those who most deserve Their companionship get it. Take a half hour each morning upon first rising, and in an undisturbed place free from all noises and bad influences concentrate your thoughts upon them and upon your own higher selves, and will that you shall become wise, and illuminated and powerful. ...."

*The Master's Work*

What then does a Master do? He is a witness to the life beyond all appearances, even his own. As fire tells us not to burn ourselves, so does the Master tell us not to forget ourselves. People forget themselves not only in anger sometimes, but in a thousand things and nearly always. The Master's human form is beautiful because his life is true. Consider the beautiful limbs of a race-horse. They have been produced quite naturally by life trying to run. What would be the use of a small horse worshipping that beauty of limb? He must run. So the Master says to us: "Do not worship me. Know that there is life which can be fulfilled in full living, and from which all beauty, truth and love will flow." In China people tried to produce small and beautiful feet by binding them, so that women might be beautiful and spiritual like flowers which sway on a slender stem. They have had to give it up and recognize the folly of external means. Small and beautiful feet relative to the size of the body belong to those who balance themselves and walk and dance well. In the West people tried tight-lacing for the figure, but they have now recognized that the shapely waist

is produced by healthy activity. If we have it not when we are old as well as young it is our own fault.

There is great danger in what is usually called devotion. True devotion is respect for the beautiful, the good and the true, wherever it may be seen. It is respect for life. But most devotion implies disrespect for life, inasmuch as it singles out one expression of life for its fervent admiration, and almost equally despises the rest. So is God shut away, as people go into caves to worship the sun. True devotion has nothing to do with that self-abasement which makes a man think that because he is inferior to another he must not rely on his own judgment. However evolved or unevolved he may be, that is exactly what he must do. The man who does not make his own vision of the goal for himself does not awaken to the full his own life in the present moment of living, and therefore does not make the most use possible for him of that moment.

I have come across some cases of partial mental paralysis due to misuse of the idea of Masters. I have heard one say: "This work has failed; that shows that the Master did not want it." It was perfectly obvious to me that the cause of the failure was that he had

not used his brains in the work under reference. Then again, when the thought is habitually turned to the Master as if he were a separate entity, in moments of difficulty, for example when there was a blank in conversation, the man would find himself able to think only of the Master's name. And also in danger, or in any crisis, do you pray or do you keep your head? You cannot do both. Every occasion is a crisis, did people but recognize it.

But what of Master's authority? Does He not know more than we? Authority is witness. It has to do with facts, not with opinions. The Master is a witness of the light, and it is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. His form is only an illusion; it is not our goal, but our life, which is also his life, is our goal. There is nothing unusual in this. In a chemistry class the professor is not our goal, but chemistry is our goal. Leaf whispers to leaf, and tells rejoicingly of the life it feels, like lovers hand in hand looking at the same moon. It is the power of love that with it we thus at last come to look with all eyes at all things.

And Master's work and orders? I see no use in them unless they are our own work

and orders at the same time. If a man does his honest best he will be doing what the Master wants to have done. If our understanding rises to what the Masters call their mind-plane their ideas become our ideas, we think their thoughts with them, and there is nothing to be gained by insisting that the ideas or purposes are theirs, not ours, which is a mode of separation of the Masters and ourselves, and tends to prevent our union in the one life. You cannot have this separation in fact. You cannot have men gradually making their own noses perfect according to their own thoughts, feelings and actions, and at the same time the Masters moulding those noses according to some external plan. Masters' work and orders are surely a question of our being attuned to their spirit and their law, which is our own true spirit and law. In that service (if such it can be called) is perfect freedom. Their teaching is an intuition, but not usually peculiar and distinguishable from what we call our own thought. There is no necessity to import into the idea of our relation to Masters the dramatic and separative characteristics of human domination or interference by man with man.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END ON THE ROAD OF LIFE

#### *Compensation*

Nearly a hundred years ago a well known American thinker, who was certainly a Theosophist in the general and proper meaning of that term, wrote an essay, which is still widely read, entitled "Compensation," in which he pointed out that what is gained in one way is usually lost in another, and what is lost in one way is usually gained in another. As told in the old story, the peacock has beauty for the eye, but the nightingale has beauty for the ear. Of late, we have been reading of medical men who have been curing rheumatism by inoculating their patients with malaria, and vice versa. The whole principle of compensation lies in the fact that one instrument is good for one thing and another for another, and it is not possible to have all powers at once, and yet be the limited creature that we know as man. The Hindus have depicted their divinities with four arms or six faces in their attempts to conceive the whole in the part, but do

what we will in this world of parts, we can have nothing that is whole—except the whole.

This is seen in action as well as in form. A man with his versatile brain and hands may hold a spade, a pen, the steering wheel of a motor-car or a hundred other things, but he cannot use them all at once. He may choose which he will, and be free in that choice—but his power is never equal to his freedom, and the appearance of activity of a man therefore can never show the full reality of his being. It is the custom of vulgar minds to judge others with extreme superficiality, and therefore to see their faults or incapacities, without realizing the tremendous reserves which thus exist in every human character.

The same principle appears again in the unfoldment of character from childhood to old age. From beginning to end the process is one of loss as well as gain. We have not at twenty-one the sweet simplicity and single-mindedness of early childhood; we have not at forty-two the uncalculating emotions of twenty-one, and at sixty-three we have not that confidence in the stark logic of the mind which was ours at forty-two.

*Awakenings*

Here appears the weak spot in the theory of evolution as it is popularly conceived, as a process of accumulation towards perfection. Some think that we go on adding to our capacities or removing our defects (according to the "builder" theory and the "sculptor" theory) through a series of incarnations, until we have accumulated to perfection. But in this way no perfection is ever reached on the road of life. Every perfection is an initiation, a beginning of something new, within the life of him who attains it. If a student understands the significance of a point in science or history it means an awakening in his mind, and it is the beginning of life lived at a higher level or more richly than before.

The circumstances of a day or a lifetime are never equal to the man, because he limits himself in attending to those circumstances, as a gardener limits himself when he is handling a spade. Roughly speaking, up to the age of about twenty-one we are giving the physical nature its turn, from then to forty-two we are giving the emotional nature its fling, and from then till sixty-three it is the mental which sits in the seat of the mighty.

For example, "calf love" is a thing of physical sensations,<sup>1</sup> entirely self-centered. The youth would like to display miracles of courage—for his own gratification, but the love of the grown man for wife and children is pure and heroic emotion, with a sensibility that penetrates into the world of life of those other beings and finds in them a set of divine wonders and glories, a vision of other and different parts of life.<sup>1</sup> Only all beings can express the whole of life. Every one of us would like to be everything at once, but we have to be content with the next best thing, which is love, the recognition in others of other parts of the all-embracing divine life, which have not been vouchsafed to us.

In the third stage, after the age of forty-two, if there is love it has lost some of its bravery, has an eye on the cupboard and is

<sup>1</sup> The other day a visitor had called at the house of a friend of mine, and had nursed the young son of the house on his knee. After he was gone, the little boy said, "Mother, I like that man." "O," replied the mother, "Why?" The child knew exactly why, and stated his reason without hesitation—"Because he has hairs in his nose!"

<sup>1</sup> In a "soda fountain" in New York, I overheard one young man say to another, with great emphasis and bitterness: "If it wasn't for the wife and kiddies I wouldn't stick it." This is common enough. Few wives know what their husbands endure, and vice versa.

largely a comfortable agreement. If there is then a conflict between love and reason, the latter wins. If the divine fire is not caught in its proper stage, not in this life will it be known to us in its simplicity and power. The opportunity has gone, for life is a thing of phases, as the hands which go round the clock do not carry the numbers with them on their journey.

### *The School of Life*

Why should there be this loss and gain? Because we are not yet truly born to life. The life that we know from day to day consists of fragments. We have not our full life, but are learning to live, and all the objects of the world which are taken up and put down one after another are like the toys of a little child. Something is gained through them that never was in them, for they are but a means for concentrating our attention upon each lesson in turn, as a child develops the mother impulse with the aid of a rag doll.

We are at school, in preparation for life, and as a child at school is immured in one classroom after another, in order to learn, let us say, history, mathematics and music in turn, so we find ourselves greatly limited by

one condition after another. And as the child will be soonest done with the mere learning of history, mathematics and music who gives full attention to those subjects each in its proper turn, and does not let its mind rove to the others, so it is the greatest wisdom in practical life to fight the battles and learn the lessons that are before us—not to wait for circumstances to change and other opportunities to present themselves. Whatever the occasion is, take your opportunity. If you have eyes, look; if you are blind, feel and hear. It was an observant man who advised us never to do unwillingly what is our necessity.<sup>1</sup>

Because we are learning one lesson at a time we are not engaged in displaying what we have so far gained, but in gaining what we have not. Therefore we cannot judge

<sup>1</sup>Understanding leads to interest and broad desires. The trouble generally is that our desires for certain things cause dislike of other things. Mr. Lilliput likes carrots. He then complains of the monotony of his table, but when cabbage or cauliflower is served he grumbles because he does not like them. Or he likes one kind of weather. Happier the man who can look out of the window in the morning, and say: "Ha, sunshine to-day. Splendid!" or "Ho, nice rain this morning. Fine!" or "Fog! What a long time it seems since we had a slice of real fog!" or if the house is washed away or burned down, "We are to have a change. Good!"

ourselves or others by the appearances of the moment. The child may be excellent at music, but that will not be apparent during the history lesson. Every one of us is engaged in showing the worst side of himself to the world, not the best, since we are here to deal with those things which develop our deficient points—and this principle displays itself all along the road of life. A man may be very near his goal; still he is here to reveal to himself some part of what remains of his own incapacity, and by struggle to convert that weakness into strength. This is another reason why no man can be a leader to another. All such leading is the blind leading the blind. Every man has his own problem, and also the key to his problem. If this knowledge disarms uncritical hero-worship it also destroys purblind criticism, which has probably done far more harm than hero-worship has ever done good.

This knowledge is immensely encouraging. No man knows when he will break through the prison-wall and come out into the open air of free full life. He is conscious of the obstruction and of the weakness of his own arms. Let him dig away at the walls; suddenly his pick will go through the last thin section as though it were an eggshell,

and he will find himself free.

*Initiation or Achievement*

Achievement is sudden. One day the schooling is finished. The child walks out into the great world armed *cap-a-pie* with all the capacities which it has laboriously acquired one by one. This is full initiation, the end of schooling, the beginning of life. People have invented various heavens for themselves, but they have been afraid to launch themselves on the ocean of free life, even in imagination. They would have a land flowing with milk and honey. When the missionaries went among the Eskimos, and wanted to translate this point in their scripture into understandable terms, they had to speak and write of a land flowing with blubber.<sup>1</sup> Some want golf, some want music, some want rest. Some say we are souls on probation, being tried to see if we are fit to be kept. Some say we are souls in evolution, accumulating experience and capacity. But I would say we are developing our capacities

<sup>1</sup>Those people think also of the "little seal of God" (instead of "lamb of God") and some of them cannot understand why Jonah missed the opportunity of his life and let that whale go!

one after another, in preparation for the beginning of full unlimited life.<sup>2</sup>

*What do you want?*

I have already explained that there is no material evolution, but there is the evolution of the powers of life in every one of us. I have explained also that the unfoldment of these powers is usually retarded—that men make for themselves a long road of life, spread out into a long future the attainments which could be gained in a short present. There is thus no penalty for not taking opportunities. They are offered even unto seventy times seven. The evolution of the individual depends entirely upon his answer to the question: "What do you want?"

<sup>2</sup> To this end all efforts are beneficial. What is not discovered by thought is learned by experience or, in other words, mistakes. So all is learnt, sooner or later, and in the deeper sense there are no mistakes. Theosophy is "knowledge of God," which means the divine here and now. In all his affairs every man is "alone with God." Beauty must meet beauty, love love, and thought thought, in those conversations. How is it that most righteous persons are not beautiful? Because they have not thought of beauty, or if they have, they have not thought beautifully, but have sought it with the ugliness of care. Others restlessly seek rest, but peace will never be attained by rest—only by life, like an eagle swiftly moving on the wing. The world is not destroyed for us when we attain our goal. It becomes vastly more, but the pain of time is gone.

Commonly, people do not examine their desires, but they go on desiring all the same. In this case the desires may be great but the intelligence is small, and therefore theirs is a long path in life, confused and almost purposeless.

### *The Four Answers*

There are only four answers to the question which each should put to himself—what do you want? (1) Some want sensations; (2) some want possessions; (3) some want friends; and (4) some few want capacity for a fuller life. We need not study the detailed psychology of these four classes of people—and there are no others—but it is well that we should observe what they are, for if our Theosophy is something to be used it will be our object to leave the first three classes immediately and so take, quite instantaneously, a great step forward in evolution.

(1) Among the people who live for sensation are those who occupy their minds with impure and exciting thoughts in their leisure hours. They think about food and drink and sex appetites and relationships. If there is conversation some of them delight in gossip, in the excitement of news and the even greater excitement of being purveyors of

news. If there is reading, they must have sensational newspapers, sloppy love stories or dreadful detective tales. If there is travelling, they must rush about in motor-cars at an unreasonable speed. If there is staying at home, there must be enormous beds and kitchens and wallowing in luxury. Or, at least, there must be comfort and peace.

(2) Those who live for possessions desire wealth or fame in some degree. I knew one vigorous old gentleman who, at the age of eighty-two, while conversing with some of his sons suddenly burst forth with the remark: "You boys don't seem to know what is really worth while in life—it is to watch your bank balance, and see it increasing every day." People of this type spare themselves no labors and shrink from no dangers in order to accumulate the possessions they desire. This gentleman died worth about a hundred thousand pounds, and even then he could not bear to break up his fortune, but left it mainly to one son. It must have cost him many a pang to leave even a small proportion each to the rest of his numerous children.

There is the same phantasmal value in the pursuit of fame; its votaries never stop to reflect that nobody knows them anyhow, just

as in connection with possessions there is usually very little real possession. And these desires appear in small and unsuccessful lives as well as in bigger and more successful lives. We must have a house, and it must be furnished like those of our neighbors, and if possible a little better.

(3) My third group consists of people who desire friends. There must be someone to entertain them in one way or another, to support them in their beliefs, or before whom they may display their latest wisdom or accomplishment. It may be only a friend—a boon companion—or it may be many friends.

These three classes or groups of people are not getting the most out of life, either in progress or in happiness. Analyze their private thoughts and feelings and you will find that the desires which they follow are not natural to them, but they have taken to them as a refuge. They are the people who are whispering to themselves, however faintly: "There is no greatness in life for us, therefore let us eat, drink and be merry for to-morrow we die." But they get precious little merriment out of it all. It is only a refuge, on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread, but it is not half a loaf, nor even a hundredth part of a loaf.

(4) My fourth class of people are those who care for the capacity to live, that is to say, for life itself. They value love and thought and will, and in the use of these powers they find happiness, with sufficient merriment on the side. I am not proposing that people should be interested only in what is going on in their own minds, in the development and exercise of character and power. It is not a material condition that we are considering, but it is life lived as such in the midst of things. Shall I enumerate the objects of desire which appear in this class? First there is health, then strength, then beauty. These cannot be acquired like possessions, and they never come to him who lives for sensation, or who depends upon the entertainment and benefit of friends. It is by living to capacity that these things become ours—but let us not talk in the language of possessions, for these good things are not possessions but are the expression of our life. Let there be indolence, selfishness and carelessness,<sup>1</sup> which are the absence of life,

<sup>1</sup> There are only three real vices—laziness, selfishness and carelessness—and laziness is easily the first and worst, for it includes both the others. When it goes, in an individual case, selfishness appears, when selfishness goes there is still carelessness. When that goes, the man begins to live as such and he soon enters our fourth

being the absence of will, love and thought, and see what becomes of health, strength and beauty.

Those who follow the fourth path, which is voluntary evolution or the unfoldment of life, soon discover the same fruit in the emotions and in the mind as in the body. Affection is the health of the emotions; interest-  
edness is their strength; cheerfulness is their beauty. And of the mind, judging is the health, planning is the strength and understanding is the beauty. Let these qualities be sought and all the material things will be added.

People tell me they are too feeble to live, that they must fall back on one or other of the three refuges. But I say their feebleness is only a habit, out of which they will come with a little effort. They must think, or at least they must try to think. Go by yourself into a dark room and shut your eyes and try for a quarter of an hour to think of something—anything. Do it day after day. If you do not succeed immediately, you will do so in a week or at any rate in a month

---

division—those who live for capacity, or life. For a full exposition of the three fundamental vices see my *Character Building*.

(though such a length of time would rarely be necessary), for the life is waiting for its awakening, and it is eager to break through the shells of habit. A little thought goes a long way. We have only to dwell upon the life until we want the life, and when we want it the life will come, and we need not then linger year after year and life after life amidst the miserable products of unintelligent desire.

### *Release of the Mind*

What I have now been talking about as the fourth path or the path of life is what we have sometimes called the probationary path. It is the release of the mind for the understanding of life. It begins with the perception that we live under laws of life or spiritual laws, which are superior to and enclose the material laws of the worlds of forms, which are only limitations or partial expressions of life.

I think that Theosophists of all times and countries have always divided mankind into these two classes—those who live for the delights of the body and those who live for the delights of life. It is really the difference between the materialists and the Theosophists, considered, not as a matter of

mental theory of life, but from that supreme test of belief which is desire expressed in practical life. On this classification, those who desire a bodily heaven, however attenuated, are materialists. But the desire to have capacity indicates that we are interested first of all in the life or living, and that the bodily things are secondary. It indicates that the affairs of life are now governed from within and not by circumstances, although they are the same affairs as before.

This understanding of life establishes a spiritual individuality in the body. I have already explained that individuality may or may not be selfish. It may go forward to many triumphs and still be centered in its own interests. But we cannot find our own life without soon finding the life in others, a discovery which starts us off on a new course of life, and has therefore been called by many "initiation." It is, of course, the beginning of a new life in which the individuality is as strong as ever but its interests reach out far beyond the limits of the body. I am not suggesting that all the people who are interested in family or community or country or humanity, or in any movement connected with these, have therefore begun this new life. In most cases it is not so, for

they are careerists, that is to say, they want to be pleased with themselves, and since they have been drilled in the idea that it is good and right and noble and advanced and so forth to have these wider activities, they often labor hard in them, but really they do so in order that they may be pleased with themselves, or so that they may not be displeased with themselves. There is much more genuine spiritual quality in the consideration for others which gives rise to natural courtesy than in many of these much larger efforts.

I must try to make this point clear, for our understanding of initiation depends upon it. Anyone who has been living for capacity for some time tends to develop what is commonly called genius, so that in a given incarnation there will be many things that he could easily do or many careers he could easily follow. Let me give an instance recorded by Lord Frederick Hamilton:—

My youngest brother would, I think, have made a great name for himself as a cricketer, had not the fairies endowed him at his birth with a fatal facility for doing everything easily. As the result of this versatility, his ambitions were continually changing. He accordingly abandoned cricket for steeplechase riding, at which he distinguished himself until politics ousted steeplechase riding. After some years, politics gave place to golf and music, which were in their supplanted

by photography. He then tried writing a few novels, and very successful some of them were, until it finally dawned on him that his real vocation in life was that of a historian.

### *Release of the Heart*

So there arises the question; what shall we do with our lives, when so many different possibilities are open to us? The answer comes naturally. We become interested in the larger life which is going on all round us. It becomes quite naturally *our* life. Individuality has gone beyond the boundary or skin of one body, and therefore a new life is begun. Love finds a motive, where reason failed. Then the only thing that holds this new life back from its perfection can be the impurities belonging to the old state. When Buddha spoke of these, he listed them as five fetters or obstacles. I need mention them only briefly, as they have been fully discussed in my little book, *The Intuition of the Will*. The first is selfishness, which we have already considered. The second is doubt or uncertainty. It is better to live according to a few things of which we are reasonably certain than according to many things as to most of which we are uncertain. If we act on our certainties our lives will be strong, and soon they will be rich. The third is

superstition, which is permitting small things to usurp the time and attention which should be given to big things. In the fourth and fifth place come liking and disliking. When there is affection, large interestedness, the incidents which formerly created a great many likes and dislikes begin to look very small indeed.

### *Release of the Will*

We have frequently used the word "arhat" in Theosophical literature, having adopted it from Buddhism. It means literally one who is able or competent—one who is really living, whose life is not obscured by circumstances. It thus has reference to the will. I am not forgetting that strictly speaking there are no circumstances, but only the expressions of our own imperfections, which stand around and jeer at us, so to speak. The arhat is an artist in life, so these forms do not trouble him. He has come to a further realization. The many lives around him are not interesting individually, any more than he is interesting to himself individually, but they constitute one picture, which he is beginning to see. There is a certain danger in talking about these things, because persons hearing about them may want to please them-

selves by being these things, and the difficulty is that such desire to be pleased with oneself stands in the way of the natural unfoldment of this reality.

The last difficulty or obstacle which the arhat has to overcome has been briefly described as the superstition of the ego. The common man thinks his body to be himself. The arhat still thinks his powers of consciousness to be himself. His individuality has grown until there is no life in which he is not interested. But what he fails to realize is that that which he calls his individuality is only the reflection of the whole in the part. The perfection of man is not an individual achievement of all perfections, but is the attainment of perfect harmony, or perfect relations with all others. Achievement must not be thought of as ability to make many more of the imperfect pictures which men are making for their own education (which constitute the world), but must be considered in terms of life itself. It is liberation from the necessity, and at the same time from the desire, to concentrate in that manner, to make those forms which are so much less than the reality and are a limitation of the life. No more would the liberated man think of making such forms than a great sculptor

would play at producing statues without heads.

There is only one one. There is no integrity except in that whole. The dew-drop must slip into the shining sea. This simile should help us. The drop of water has two parts—its waterness and its dropness. Its waterness is its essential nature; its dropness is accidental and external. If individuality is thought of as the dropness there is an error. Well then, when the dew-drop slips into the shining sea it is the same water that it was before. It is the same life. All the individuality or character that we ever show is but the reflection in part of that which alone has individuality—the whole.

It is a very profitable thing to dwell upon the idea of entering the world of life. In that there will be all variety but no limitations. In that we shall have returned to our own true and full nature in full strength and power, so that our will will be as wide as the world and the full aroma of reality will be over all. This is the liberated soul—not one who is full of power and desire to interfere with the world (which is nothing but a collection of life-expressions) but one who has entered into life.

## Books by the Same Author

---

Character Building .....	\$1.25
Concentration .....	1.75
Destiny .....	.75
Guide to Theosophy .....	.75
Intuition of the Will .....	1.50
Memory Training .....	1.25
Personal Psychology and The Sub- Conscious Mind .....	
Paper	.35
Raja Yoga: The Occult Training of the Hindus .....	
Paper	.35
The Seven Rays .....	1.75
An Englishman Defends Mother India	3.00

---

**The Theosophical Press**  
Wheaton, Illinois

